

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-10, and 12-21 are currently pending. Claims 5, 11, 22, and 23 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, and 21 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 9, 11-13, 16, 17, 21, and 23 were objected to regarding various informalities; Claims 16-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement; Claims 1, 2, 8-11, 14, 15, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,561,699 to Fenner (hereinafter “the ‘699 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,131,690 to Galando (hereinafter “the ‘690 patent”); Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘699 and ‘690 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,950,496 to Zimmerman et al. (hereinafter “the ‘496 patent”); and Claims 5, 12, and 13 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants respectfully submit that the objections to Claims 1, 9, 11, and 16 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims. Claims 1, 9, 13, and 16 have been amended as suggested in the Office Action. Further, Claim 21 has been amended to depend from Claim 16, as suggested in the Office Action. However, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claim 13 regarding the “second signal.” Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 11 provides antecedent basis for the second signal recited in Claim 13. Accordingly, the objections to the claims are believed to have been overcome.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claims 16-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 16. Claim 16 has been amended to recite a state detection unit configured to detect a state of attachment of the operation unit to the bed, rather than a state of attachment of the drive unit to the bed. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 16 satisfies 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2, 8-10, 14, and 15) under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in Claim 5, which was indicated as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) is in condition for formal allowance and patentably defines over any proper combination of the '699 and '690 patents. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claims 11 and 22 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of those claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 3, 4, 6, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 23 is rendered moot by the present cancellation of that claim.

Applicants note that Claims 12 and 13 have been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations recited in Claims 1 and 11. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claims 12 and 13 are in condition for formal allowance.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 12, 13, and 16 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '699, '690, and '496 patents.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

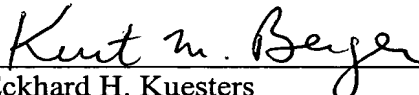
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